

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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R 301200Z OCT 75

FM AMCONSUL DURBAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2059

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS DURBAN 0380

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, ELAB, SF

SUBJ: NEWCASTLE BUS BOYCOTT ENDS

REF: DURBAN 366 AND PREVIOUS

1. NEWCASTLE BUS BOYCOTT HAS ENDED WITH MAJORITY OF RESIDENTS OF MADADENI AND OSIZWENI TOWNSHIPS ONCE MORE USING TRANS TUGELA TRANSPORT (TTT) BUSES TO COMMUTE TO THEIR JOBS IN NEWCASTLE. BOYCOTT END FOLLOWED MEETINGS IN THE TWO TOWNSHIPS AT WHICH TIME THE DECISION OF THE KWAZULU GOVERNMENT AND BANTU INVESTMENT CORPORATION (BIC) TO BUY TTT (REFTEL) WAS EXPLAINED TO BOYCOTTING RESIDENTS. NEW "RATIONALIZED" FARE STRUCTURE AGREED UPON BY KWAZULU GOVERNMENT AND BIC, WHICH WILL DECREASE FARES WHILE ALSO SHORTENING BUS ROUTES, WAS ALSO PRESENTED; PRE-BOYCOTT BA IC FARE (PER KILOMETER) RISE WHICH PRECIPITATED BOYCOTT WILL, HOWEVER, NOT BE CHANGED.

2. RESIDENTS OF OSIZWENI TOWNSHIP--SITUATED APPROXIMATELY TWENTY-FIVE KILOMETERS FROM NEWCASTLE--WERE FIRST TO BEGIN REUSING THE BUSES. DESPITE PROTESTS FROM SOME MADADENI RESIDENTS--WHO APPARENTLY ARE CONTINUING TO BOYCOTT BUSES--
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MOST RE IDENTIS OF THIS TOWNSHIP ARE ALSO ONCE AGAIN

PATRONIZING THE BUSES. PRINCIPAL ARGUMENT AGAINST ACCEPTANCE OF NEW FARE/ROUTE STRUCTURE IS THAT IT REQUIRES BUS PATRONS TO WALK THROUGH LARGE TOWNSHIPS TO REACH BUS STOPS; THIS, SOME RESIDENTS CHARGE, UNNECESSARILY EXPOSES THEM TO VIOLENCE ENDEMIC IN TOWNSHIPS. INADEQUATE POLICE PROTECTION AND STREET LIGHTING MAKE MUGGINGS OF PEDESTRIANS NORMAL OCCURRENCE IN TOWNSHIPS.

3. COMMENT: PLAN TO REDUCE FARES, WHILE SHORTENING BUS ROUTES, ACCEPTED BY RESIDENTS OF NEWCASTLE'S TWO TOWNSHIPS IS VERY SIMILAR TO COMPROMISE OFFER BY BUS COMPANY SHORTLY AFTER BOYCOTT BEGAN. ACCEPTANCE OF PLAN AT THIS STAGE PROBABLY THE RESULT OF WEARINESS WITH WALKING SUBSTANTIAL DISTANCES TO AND FROM WORK AND REALIZATION THAT PROFITS FROM FUTURE BUS SYSTEM OPERATIONS WILL GO INTO AFRICAN RATHER THAN WHITE POCKETS.
BERG

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